

# Leadership In Aid



## How to Build up your Team

There are two key factors in the creation of an effective team : time spent together in shared experiences and the communication between members of the team. Get this right and the toughest times on the toughest assignments can be hugely successful for everyone.

First, there need to be many shared experiences, both personal and professional in which everyone gets collectively involved. This makes team members change from focusing on themselves to identifying with the team.

Rather than spending more time working, spend some time in social activities that improve communication, understanding and relationships between team members.

Leaders are responsible for the communication processes of their teams. They need to set the example by being more facilitative than directive. They must also make sure that each individual's thoughts and ideas get heard. Equally, be respectful and open to diverse or opposing points of view.

***Communicate with everyone!***  
*Communication needs to be continual, open, honest and safe. No opinion is discounted, no idea is silly and a maximum amount of dialogue is encouraged.*

Here are some simple, straightforward, low cost, high impact ideas for encouraging the development of your team.

- A problem-solving meeting focused specifically on solving a key problem that the team is experiencing – with ALL the team
- A decision-making meeting focused entirely on making decisions that will affect the entire team
- A weekly meeting during which ALL team members share their key accomplishments and successes (even problems), followed by social time together
- A monthly breakfast or lunch, with NO work agenda
- A tradition of ordering pizza on Fridays, doughnuts or croissants on Mondays, having a special coffee break in the afternoon – or similar
- Celebrating team members' birthdays, or other events – even if it's just cake and coffee
- Gathering together to watch a sport event – the World Cup ?
- Choosing relevant books or articles to be read and discussed by the team (at those weekly coffee sessions ?)
- Going to the movies, a play or concert as a team.

All these are simple, cost-effective and help to focus people to celebrate as a group. Building effective teams is hard, but with proper preparation and determination it works. Try and see what happens – you'll be glad you did.

*This how-to-guide is specifically designed as part of an ongoing series of "How To" guides for People in Aid by the Center for Creative Leadership ( [www.CCL.org/europe](http://www.CCL.org/europe) ) for leaders at all levels in humanitarian and development organizations.*